

## **'Enhancing Impact, Inspiring Excellence: Collaborative Approaches between Archives and Universities' Conference to be held at the University of Birmingham on 4<sup>th</sup> September**

### **Hurd but not Seen: the archive of Bishop Richard Hurd Unwrapped in Partnership with the University of Worcester and the University of Birmingham**

**Chris to open – HL**

#### **Slide 1 – title**

The HL is in HC - home of the Bps of Worc for over 800 years. Founded 230 yrs ago by this man, RH, Bp from 1781-1808.

#### **Slide 2 - Hurd**

A purpose built library above the castle's long gallery.

#### **Slide 3 – Library**

View of the room with the door opening just a chink. Until recently a good image for a collection largely unknown.

Main collection about 5,000 printed books but also archives and mss, with a few exceptions unexplored.

#### **Slide 4 – mss**

Images of a few -some literally unwrapped.

#### **Slide 5 – bundle**

A bundle stabbed down the middle and still fastened with a piece of 18th cent string.

Letter books, deeds, loose unsorted notes, some genealogical material showing that family history could be an 18th cent passion just as it is now

What is proving most attractive to scholars now are Hurd's commonplace books, started when he was only 24, and extensive marginalia in the printed books.

#### **Slide 6 – Clarendon**

Of particular interest a 6 vol ed of Clarendon's History of the rebellion annotated by Hurd's friend, Wm Warburton

#### **Slide 7 – Clarendon**

And here is one of the commonplace books referring to Clarendon.

Library has no funding. Managed by volunteers. Since 2008 working hard to raise profile. 2009 great good fortune to attract the attention of the U of Worc.

Rachel will now tell you a bit about this.

### **Rachel – UW partnership**

A partnership between the Hurd Library and the University of Worcester grew from the interest of the Early Modern Research Group at the University.

### **Slide 8 – EMRG website**

This group sits within the Institute of Humanities and the Creative Arts and was formed to bring together staff and external scholars with a wide range of interests. These interests include, medieval drama and pageantry, Shakespeare and the Jacobean, witchcraft and the devil during the Renaissance, Irish history after the Restoration, seventeenth-century landscape poetry and the eighteenth century in fiction, poetry and journalism.

More on their activities and events can be found on their website

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/humanities-early-modern-research-group.html>

### **Bishop Hurd's Commonplace Books**

### **Slide 9 – Andreas and Stephen**

Initial research was undertaken by staff within the EMRG

on Bishop Hurd's Commonplace books, already mentioned by Chris in her introduction.

### **Slide 10 – Hurd's Commonplace books**

These books are a rich source of information, and contain Hurd's personal collection of quotations, observations, political views and information on topics of personal interest to him. Hurd's Commonplace books reflect the popular interest in keeping such a record, which reached its peak during the Renaissance and remained vibrant into the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

More research on these items was planned dependent upon the outcome of an AHRC funding bid, which, sadly, was unsuccessful and that particular research project remains to be done.

*(It was Political comment and reading culture).*

### **Workshop with students**

Of course, the introduction of both undergrad and postgraduate students to the material available in the Hurd Library is high on the agenda of both partners. The first visit from a group of UW students came in 2011. Academic staff planned a workshop to introduce a group of Masters Students to the material, with the following aims:

#### **Slide 11 – workshop with MA students**

- To expose the students to the material – archival and printed.
- To enhance research skills, from handling the material through to content investigation.

that is, introducing the students to the concept of Commonplace books – what they are and why they are important, and to the material culture of bookreading.

#### **Slide 12 – more on Commonplace books plus e.g. of Commonplace Book**

The Commonplace books of the period shed particular light on Georgian men and women's experiences as readers. As I already mentioned, they recorded and reflected on favourite passages in their Commonplace books. This activity gives

us some evidence of literary fashion, which in its turn affected how men and women viewed themselves and their position in society, and of course some of them were in turn shaping reading fashions by their own published work. So you can see why these personal books are such a rich source of material for understanding how an educated 18<sup>th</sup> century person thought.

- To introduce the students to palaeography – in the Commonplace books of both Bishop RH and his nephew RH jnr, the writing is easily decipherable (esp RH jnr) so it was an easy start for the students.

Note that RH jnr acted as his uncle's amanuensis and from the evidence we have, we deduce that he had rather a nice life out at H'bury Castle being a quiet man with scholarly interests.

Students undertook a short task to identify political material and comment contained in the Commonplace books.

This visit resulted in significantly increased awareness of the position of Commonplace books in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and directed the students to reflect on the society which produced them with greater understanding. (*Skills outcome?*).

**Doctoral students** – have also visited the library( *twice so far (2008 and 2010)*) and one in particular found material helpful to her specialism. In fact it was again Hurd's Commonplace books that were especially helpful. Another potentially fruitful source for her research is the marginalia to literary texts especially notes written by Pope.

### **Website design with DAC students**

#### **Slide 13 – DAC students**

Then in 2011 the opportunity was offered to a group of 2<sup>nd</sup> year undergrads from the Digital Arts Course, to visit the library with a view to designing a

website for the Hurd Library. This project was to fulfil an assessed assignment brief. In previous years this group of students had been given a brief to design a website for the UW storytelling Festival, now the Beeline Festival, run out of the International Forum for Research into Children's Literature. This time they were given a choice between the Festival and the Hurd Library, two very different projects but with more potential overlap than you might immediately perceive. Approximately 50% of the group opted for the Hurd brief. The results were not intended to go live, and the skills outcomes included in the brief modelled the outcomes of the assignment.

Chris and I were drawn into the project, answering any questions that surfaced from individual students (which were many) and enabling students to visit the library as many times as they needed to in order to take photographs to provide images for their site. Some of the students involved saw the potential to include interactive elements to engage the interest of children and young people in the material available. Given that the project was an assignment of limited length, these ideas were included in their design notes but they were unable to create the activities. We hope such ideas may be incorporated into a live site in the future.

You will no doubt have guessed that this group was outside of the anticipated profile of a visitor with a literary interest. We had no idea how they would react to the room or the material. Their enthusiasm for both was refreshing and their approach to both from a visual viewpoint broadened our own mainly literary/historical position.

Pitfall - Chris and I had not quite anticipated the amount of time, energy and input required from us for this project but we managed to **accommodate the needs of the students and maintain good relationships with the academic**

**staff** involved. When these two elements are present, it is possible to make almost anything work whatever unexpected extras may appear.

## **Skills for the Future**

### **Slide 14 – SfTf**

Saving the best until last, a major element of the partnership consists of a Lottery Funded SfTf Project trainee shared between the UW Research Collections and the Hurd Library. The first 15 month placement started in August 2011, and now we have Alison whose traineeship started in April and is, again, for 15 months.

Her archival work includes:

Investigation of genealogical papers and the creation of a Database of provenances and marginalia in printed books.

The genealogical work is on a set of papers, generally concerned with Bishop Hurd's legacy and family history. They include letters written to Richard Hurd Junior who was researching his uncle's family history; Hurd Junior's various notes on the subject; two family trees, one mainly paternal and one mainly maternal, (presumably drawn by Hurd Junior); and transcribed copies of memorial inscriptions.

### **Slide 15 – part of family tree Copy of the Hurd family tree drawn by RH Jnr 064.**

Alison also created documents summarising the information on each of the two family trees and has compiled a small database of the papers, with fields for **names of authors, dates** (where marked), '**assigned numbers**' marked on the papers by a previous user, [*names of families mentioned in individual papers and relevant to Hurd Junior's genealogical project,*] and other potentially useful information. Please ask A if you are interested in more information.

Alison hopes to develop this database to make it suitable to catalogue other papers held by the Hurd Library. [*This would probably involve the creation of additional tables, with some subset-specific fields to allow records from all subsets to be viewed, searched and filtered and from which reports could be run.*]

## **Slide 16 - The Future**

Volunteers and trainee:

We hope to involve volunteers alongside the trainee in the catalogue work with both archives and books, and to continue work on the database of provenances and marginalia to provide. An index to this aspect of the resources has been identified as a particular need by some of our researchers.

UW partners EMRG still hope to secure funding to digitise the early catalogues; to create a model of the Library from earlier arrangements in order to conceptualise the library as it was and how these arrangements shed light on Hurd's thought since the mss catalogues contribute to the understanding of Hurd's writing.

Members of the EMRG aim to continue to present papers to International conferences on Hurd and all his works.

Before handing back to Chris to conclude, I'd like to reiterate how vital it is for both partners to get on well and to be generous with time and expertise. We are fortunate that both have already been well demonstrated in partnership.

[*Significant points: Accommodate students and keep good relations with academic staff. Willingness and enthusiasm from relevant departments in partner institution to complete projects.*]

## CONCLUSION

What we've learned is the mutual benefit of working with univ staff and students.

As well as partnership with Worc, we've had others - including a research student from Hurd's old College, Emmanuel Cambridge studying episcopal palaces;

a prof from Ohio on the notes in Clarendon;

Hugh Adlington from the Eng dept here on Hurd's notes on Milton

And a recent contact from another member of the Eng dept who wants her MA students to develop some research experience by looking at the archives - in December so I hope we can keep them warm

All these contacts have, we think, been helpful to our colleagues - but an absolute godsend for us.



## Commonplace Books - information

*a way to compile knowledge, usually by writing information into books. Such books were essentially scrapbooks filled with items of every kind: medical recipes, quotes, letters, poems, tables of weights and measures, proverbs, prayers, legal formulas. Commonplaces were used by readers, writers, students, and scholars as an aid for remembering useful concepts or facts they had learned. Each commonplace book was unique to its creator's particular interests. They became significant in Early Modern Europe.*

*"Commonplace" is a translation of the Latin term locus communis (from Greek tópos koinós, see literary topos) which means "a theme or argument of general application", such as a statement of proverbial wisdom. In this original sense, commonplace books were collections of such sayings, such as John Milton's commonplace book. Scholars have expanded this usage to include any manuscript that collects material along a common theme by an individual.*

*John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Coleridge and Jonathan Swift all kept [commonplace] books, copying down proverbs, poems and other wisdom they encountered while reading. So did many women, often excluded from public discourse at the time. By appropriating others' nuggets, writes cultural historian Robert Darnton, 'you made a book of your own, one stamped with your personality.*

*'It should be noted that commonplace books are not diaries nor travelogues, with which they can be contrasted: English Enlightenment philosopher John Locke wrote the 1706 book A New Method of a Common Place Book, "in which techniques for entering proverbs, quotations, ideas, speeches were formulated. Locke gave specific advice on how to arrange material by subject and category, using such key topics as love, politics, or religion. Commonplace books, it must be stressed, are not journals, which are chronological and introspective.*

*Georgian men and women's experiences as readers explores their use of commonplace books for recording favourite passages and reflecting upon what they had read, revealing forgotten aspects of their complicated relationship with the printed word. It shows how indebted English readers often remained to techniques for handling, absorbing and thinking about texts that were rooted in classical antiquity, in Renaissance humanism and in a substantially oral culture. It also reveals how a series of related assumptions about the nature and purpose of reading influenced the roles that literature played in English society in the ages of Addison, Johnson and Byron; how the habits and procedures required by commonplacing affected readers' tastes and so helped shape literary fashions; and how the experience of reading and responding to texts increasingly encouraged literate men and women to imagine themselves as members of a polite, responsible and critically aware public.*

**Nb – for Oct 16<sup>th</sup> include more information on Commonplace books and integrate the powerpoints into one presentation. Also some blog screen shots.**

pics attached - the first is the notes at the front of Warburton's Clarendon, to replace the one on the powerpoint, which is the one in RHjr's copy, the 2nd is our man himself, the 3rd another page on Clarendon from the commonplace book which is more legible.

Matt's notes advise we include the essential lessons learnt during partnership; useful points for those considering such a partnership and important factors in maintaining a partnership. The purpose of the session we are assigned to is to show the contribution made by academic collaboration to archival knowledge and to showcase the varied work and unique skills and knowledge held by archivists and how knowledge can be developed and shared when working with academics.

I think I might say when winding up how vital it is to get on well, be outgoing and for both partners to be generous with time and expertise - all well demonstrated in ours!